

WORKERS WORLD

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Global warming and capitalism Speculators feast on Russian disaster

By Deirdre Griswold

The race is already on in commodities markets worldwide to wring new fortunes out of the climate catastrophe now raging in Russia. It's a chilling example of how capitalism works in a time of crisis.

Russia is in the middle of the worst heat wave ever recorded in that vast country, most of which lies far to the north and historically has experienced relatively cool summers and frigid winters.

Over the 130 years that records have been kept, Moscow had a pleasant average of 75 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer months. This July and early August the thermometer spiked at 100 degrees — and is staying there. Hundreds of wildfires are raging in the parched forests, causing deadly smog throughout the area. The death rate in Moscow has doubled to 700 a day, which health officials blame on the smog.

Further south, in the breadbasket steppes of Russia that have made it the world's third-largest exporter of wheat, temperatures have been even hotter and crops are failing. Cattle and poultry are dying from the heat, the drought and lack of fodder. Some automakers temporarily halted production because of the extreme heat in southern Russia. (Bloomberg BusinessWeek, Aug. 5)

The Russian government announced in early August that, due to this crisis, it would not be exporting any more wheat this year.

Capitalist vultures feast

Immediately, the speculators went to work.

In the Chicago Mercantile Exchange and other markets around the world where betting goes on over the future of crops, huge sums began changing hands as capitalists gamble over how high the price of wheat will go if the devastating heat wave and drought do not end in time to rescue most of this year's harvest.

Relief does not appear to be in sight. The state weather service predicted that temperatures in most parts of central

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HARTFORD SHOOTINGS

Racism & sick economy bring tragedy

By Larry Hales

Early on Tuesday, Aug. 3, Omar Thornton was in a meeting with officials of Hartford Distributors and the Teamsters local that represents drivers at the beer wholesaler in Manchester, Conn. The company alleges that employee Thornton had been stealing beer and that it had videotaped evidence after being allowed by the union to use surveillance against Thornton.

According to Steve Hollander, whose family owns the distributor, Thornton was given the option of being fired or permitted to resign. He said Thornton chose to sign resignation paperwork, but before leaving pulled out a pistol and began shooting.

In all, nine people died after being shot at the warehouse — Thornton and eight others who worked there. Thornton's

family, his companion and her mother, an ex-partner and her family all say that Thornton had taken pictures of racist images in the plant, had recorded conversations of co-workers and had complained to them about racist harassment.

Hollander describes Thornton both as having been very calm and as having gone on a rampage — a seeming contradiction. Dr. Keith Ablow, who once was brought in to psychoanalyze a white supremacist to help his defense attorneys prepare an insanity plea, claims that deep-seated rage, not racism, caused Thornton to commit the acts he is alleged to have committed.

Ross Hollander, president of Hartford Distributors, and the company's lawyer report that no complaints of racism had been filed. Officials of the union local have corroborated the company officials' story and proceeded to trumpet the beer

distributor's long-standing commitment to the city of Manchester, a small town in Hartford County, Conn.

To be sure, the events of that Tuesday were terrible and can't be made light of. The act itself cannot be condoned nor can one dismiss the hardship and heartache of the families involved, including the loved ones of Omar Thornton.

Teamsters official Christopher Roos said the shootings had "nothing to do with race" and labeled the 34-year-old Thornton as merely a "disgruntled employee." This statement is, at the very least, irresponsible. Political people have to scrutinize the events that led to the shooting and also see them in a larger context of national oppression.

Thornton made a 911 call after he spoke to his mother and shortly before taking

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CENTERFOLD



Lolita Lebrón, 1954.



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Black men attacked in three states

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**
Detroit

Several brutal attacks have targeted African-American men in Michigan, Virginia and Ohio.

In Flint, Mich, site of the deadliest attacks, five African-American men have been murdered since May, and 15 others have been injured. All those who were assaulted are African American except one. They were attacked with a knife or sharp object; however, no one was robbed. This has led to the view that the assailant, who is a white man in his late 20s or early 30s, intended to kill the men he attacked.

In all cases described here, the assailant asked for directions or assistance with a broken vehicle; then the attack began.

On Aug. 9, officials confirmed at a Flint press conference that there have been similar attacks in Leesburg, Va., near Washington, D.C.

The Detroit Free Press reports in Leesburg, “On Thursday, a 15-year-old black male was stabbed in an attack as he was jogging around 9:45 p.m. Two days later, a 67-year-old man was stabbed as he sat on a porch outside an apartment building. Both men were African American.” (Aug. 9)

Both men survived the Leesburg assault and have been hospitalized. A Latino man was also attacked with a hammer in a shopping center parking lot. And on Aug. 7, Anthony Leno, 59, was attacked in an alley near Collingwood Presbyterian Church in Toledo, Ohio.

Flint and the economic crisis

Flint has been hit hard by the economic crisis that began there more than two decades ago. Major plants have closed, industrial jobs have left, and homes have been foreclosed while public spending cuts continue. The city’s unemployment rate is nearing 24 percent.

John Danz Jr., a former Flint resident, explained, “I moved away from my hometown of Flint just two months ago. It was the best move I ever made in my life. My mom decided to move back to Flint from Texas after three years because she missed her family. ... Trouble is, Flint is an abysmal cesspool financially and socially. She didn’t think, and now she wonders how she’ll get by without a job from week to week. ... In eight months in Flint, my mom had one temporary job for three weeks. I never came close to finding a job.” (News Blaze, Aug. 7)

Flint’s economy was based on the automotive industry that grew rapidly during the early and middle years of the 20th century. The first significant autoworkers sit-down strike in 1937 took place in Flint at General Motors. The strike and plant occupation marked a turning

point in the recognition of the United Auto Workers as a collective bargaining unit.

Racist attacks have escalated in the U.S.

The killings and assaults that appear to be racially motivated are not taking place in isolation. Civil rights organizations and other agencies that research racist provocations and violence report that the number of groups advocating intolerance and hatred have increased in the last two years since Barack Obama’s candidacy and presidency.

The NAACP, among others, has criticized the Tea Party movement for harboring racist elements within its ranks. At Tea Party gatherings, there are reactionary signs, which ridicule President Obama and even say he should “go back to Africa,” although he was born in the U.S.

When President Obama visited Warren, Mich., last year, a white woman carried a racist sign outside the venue where he was speaking. The sign accused Obama of “turning the United States into Uganda.” She was asked, “What’s wrong with Uganda? It is one of the most beautiful countries in Africa.” However, she gave no response.

The Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice was demonstrating in the area where Obama was speaking. As protesters called for a federally imposed moratorium on foreclosures and a national jobs program, they noticed several white people making derogatory statements about President Obama.

The attacks against African-American men must be viewed within the same context as the passage of Arizona’s SB 1070, the anti-immigrant, racial profiling law. African Americans and Latinos/as have borne the brunt of the current economic crisis; they have the highest unemployment rates in the country.

Tens of thousands across the country have joined in recent mass marches opposing Arizona’s racist law. On Aug. 28 the UAW and the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition are co-sponsoring a mass demonstration in Detroit calling for jobs, justice and peace. This will be followed by the One Nation march in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 2, with demands similar to those raised on Aug. 28. Oct. 7 has been designated a National Day of Action to Defend Public Education.

Working-class people and the nationally oppressed must come out in great numbers for these demonstrations. The racists and neo-fascists can only be defeated through mass mobilizations and political education campaigns that focus attention on the real impact of the capitalist crisis on all working people throughout the U.S. and the world.

The writer is editor of the Pan-African News Wire.

Hartford shootings: Racism & sick economy

Continued from page 1

his own life. He explained his rationale: The company and the town of Manchester, where he worked but did not live, are racist, and he had been subjected to ill treatment since he began with the company. He said, “They’re treating me bad over here. And treat all other Black employees bad over here, too. So I took it to my own hands and handled the problem. I wish I could have got more of the people.” He added, “But yeah, these people here are crazy. And they treat me bad from when I started here. Racist company. Treat me bad. I’m the only Black they’ve already got here. They treat me bad over here, treat me bad all the time.” (www.masslive.com/news, Aug. 6)

Thornton began working at the company two years

ago and was more recently promoted to driver, a position with a better salary and benefits.

His companion, Kristi Hannah, describes him as happy at the change in position but says he complained of racism at the warehouse. He took pictures of racist graffiti in a bathroom and showed them to her. He attempted to file a complaint but got no response to his attempts.

Friends corroborate racist treatment

Friends and family describe him as loving, generous and calm. Bruce LeFebvre, owner of Chemstation New England and a former employer of Thornton, remarked about how nice he was when he worked at that company. (Hartford Guardian, Aug. 4; all the following quotes are

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Band of Brothers an inspiration to all

Woodlawn Cemetery workers fight racism on the job

By Gavrielle Gemma
Bronx, N.Y.

Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx features 400 beautifully maintained, serene and quiet acres. But for the 38 workers who maintain it, especially the Black and Latino workers, that serenity masked a pit of ugly racism until a group of workers, the “Band of Brothers,” started fighting back.

They are Latino and Black united in an unbreakable bond forged by oppression and struggle. Their names are not used here “due to the retaliation on the job that we continue to endure for standing up and speaking out.” This is what they say about the situation.

Years ago there were more than 100 workers. These workers were all white, as are all the managers. Cut after cut whittled down the numbers, speeding up and putting pressure on the workers. Safety was sacrificed. After some Black and Latino workers were hired, management lured some white workers into the boss’s game of blaming the new workers of color.

“Management and some white co-workers would humiliate and make us feel worthless, powerless. When I started, morale was low,” explained A. “The yard foreman was causing tension, and the company manipulated and pitted workers against each other. He’d use the N-word. It was systematic racism. Primary positions never went to people of color. It made me feel bad.

“We never had union meetings; men never spoke up. We went to the union (United Service Workers Local 74/811), which did nothing. We filed NLRB charges; nothing happened. Then other workers got hired and we united and became shop stewards.”

B explained: “When I started on the job, racial tensions were high. I felt very alone. This was caused by white foremen and management and some white workers, from the moment we arrived at work until we left. I tried to be polite to everyone, but when I would say good morning to the superintendent, he would glare, look me up and down, and say nothing. I had to swallow everything because I was on probation.

“The racist anti-Black and anti-Latino epithets continued. Workers of color were assigned the hardest jobs in the sun when

the weather was 100 degrees. The management would ‘forget’ to bring us water.

“There are several indoor bathrooms at Woodlawn, but they segregated Blacks and Latinos to working where there was only a port-a-potty. Previously, field foremen would pick workers up and drive them to the bathrooms. But not for us. They would actually move the port-a-potty to an area where we were, making a disgusting mess.” A and B would not eat or drink, so that they wouldn’t need to go to the bathroom. “We would not let our dignity down. Harassment and surveillance was stepped up.” All the while Woodlawn denied the charges.

The Brothers knew they had to get help. They met an exceptional peoples’ attorney, Ramon Jimenez, who started working on their case and brought them to other struggles and organizations like 4 da South Bronx (fighting for community jobs at Yankee Stadium), the South Bronx Community Congress and the Bail Out the People Movement.

Petitions were circulated; the Brothers spoke at meetings as Jimenez confronted the management. A long fight for newspaper and radio coverage of the situation was increasingly successful.

While Woodlawn is supposedly a non-profit organization, its management is a Wall Street “Who’s Who.” First they hired an “independent” company to investi-

gate the charges of racism. After stalling for many months, the investigator issued a report denying racism. They refuse to make the actual report public.

On July 16 a militant demonstration was carried out at the Woodlawn Cemetery gates, bringing together many groups, religious leaders and the newly formed Freedom Party, including its candidate for governor, Charles Barron. It was a turning point. The management hired Rubenstein Public Relations, an ultra-expensive firm, to pretty up their racist image, which was now becoming well known.

Rubenstein Public Relations has represented former athletes and movie stars who were caught making racist, sexist comments in public. Its head is on the Real Estate Board of New York and represents several banks. Their advice is always the same: Admit nothing, but say you’ll do better.

On Aug. 2 the workers learned that the company had fired one of the most foul racist supervisors, supposedly not for racism but for poor work performance. As B explained, “We know this is a partial victory, but it is not enough. Just before firing Rocco they had been promoting him, all while we were telling them Rocco was using racial slurs.”

That same day, the company stated in a press release, “It was concluded that we can do better, and so we shall — im-

mediately. ... Our Board believes we have an obligation to let our community know that we have responded to the challenge, and we have found ourselves in need of change.” The statement claims that they will “reconfigure” their supervisory personnel and have sensitivity training to prevent discriminatory actions.

B points out, however, that they threaten the workers in the same release: “They say they will have ‘far more rigorous documentation of work performance of ... employees.’ This is a threat to retaliate.”

B explains, “The cemetery management are the ambassadors of greed. The whip of oppression and hate is still upon us. They have the audacity to say Rocco was fired for job performance. It is an insult and slap in the face, and is, in fact, cosmetically covering up what the truth really is.”

The Brothers are continuing the fight against racism at Woodlawn. They want Robert Scheer, the superintendent, and Ed Markiewicz, head of Human Relations, fired because they are both personally guilty of racist actions, language and retaliation.

The Brothers are also committed to carrying out the struggle against safety violations, seniority violations and cutbacks on behalf of all their co-workers, and to building a fighting union.

Please sign their online petition at www.ipetitions.com/petition/fortheworkers/

Woodlawn workers’ anti-racist leader on Omar Thornton tragedy

A leader of the Woodlawn Cemetery workers made the following comments on the events in Connecticut involving Omar Thornton:

“These tragic stories are born from the hateful racist people in positions of authority that exploit and take advantage of the current circumstance we’re in, using the economic, health care, immigration and housing issues to oppress laborers and keep them from speaking out for fear of losing their jobs and not being able to provide for their families. The Omar Thornton story is one that we are all too familiar with, having to deal with racist bosses and an environment filled with hate. It’s not

that hard to put two and two together and know that he snapped, having his human natural animal instincts of survival kick in as he felt alone and threatened with his livelihood, character, way of life, etc.

We as a people must increase our efforts because racism and oppression are running rampant everywhere. The other major factor has to be that the unions need to be cleansed of officials that are in bed with management and do not defend their rank-and-file members. It is that disconnect which creates such a weakness and the lack of integrity that allows many big companies and businesses to do what they want and think they can get away with it.

“We as laborers must take back our unions, remove those officials that are corrupt and replace them with leaders that stand on foundations of integrity, equality and social justice. We have fought too hard and have sacrificed too much in the past to allow our rights and dignity as working men/women to be stripped away from us in this present time. The new civil rights movement is the labor movement and if we are going to overpower and overcome the powers that be, then the unions must consolidate and form an alliance along with the community to fight against racism as well as other issues that affect us all. ... And the time is NOW!!!” □

Hartford shootings: Racism & sick economy bring tragedy

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The Hollander family, Teamster official Roos and town officials may claim there was no racism, but they are not people of color. Their denial of and refusal to acknowledge that is the type of behavior that can contribute to an employee feeling isolated, with few options for recourse. Thornton, reportedly either the only Black person or one of four Black people at the warehouse, told his companion that his complaints were ignored.

Latroy Dale Jr., who attended the same truck driving licensing school as Thornton in 2000, said that his friend spoke to him about having made nine complaints about his co-workers’ abusive treatment.

Thornton got his truck license before he applied for the job at the distributor but was denied the position of driver. Latroy Dale Sr. said, “They had him in that ware-

house for about a year and a half, talking about he was slow. They said he wasn’t ready. Omar made about eight or nine complaints to those people Omar let it got to him, and he snapped.”

Thornton’s brother, Edward Kinder, said that on the job Thornton was called “n---r” and “porch monkey.” Another friend, Lou Daniels, who worked at a gas station in Bloomfield, Conn., remarked that Thornton had complained to him about the difficulties he had on the job the last time they spoke. Daniels said, “He was such a low-key kind of a person. He was quiet. I think something drove him to that point.”

Thirman L. Milner, who was the first Black mayor of Hartford back in the 1980s, said, “I don’t think the young man would’ve made up those kinds of allegations. ... He probably didn’t know he could turn to organizations to file his complaint.”

There is little indication that there will be any investigation into the racism at this company, but racism is pervasive in U.S. society. There is the systemic racism, evident in the overwhelming numbers of Black people and other oppressed people in the criminal justice system, the legal and extra-legal targeting of Latino/a immigrants, and the high unemployment rates of people of color. In many inner-city areas, unemployment for young Black men is as high as 60 percent.

When Latroy Dale Sr. told the Hartford Guardian, “Everybody who is Black knows what happened,” he was speaking an irrefutable truth. An oppressed person understands the anger and frustration that can build up and also knows that people who do not face such daily indignities cannot understand the feelings that well up inside a person.

The media focus on whether or not

Thornton stole cases of beer is obfuscation. Maybe he did, maybe he didn’t. But that is beside the point in a society where even the president of the country, a man who is 100 percent behind the wars abroad, has been subject to racist campaigns against himself and members of his cabinet, like the environmentalist Van Jones and other people of color in high positions, which ended in Obama bending to the whims of the reactionaries.

Omar Thornton was not in a high position. He was a worker who, like many others, was deep in debt and couldn’t walk away from his job in a period of serious economic crisis and an epic unemployment rate among Black men. He had suffered for two years through racist taunts. He got no help from his union. All workers should be asking themselves: What can we do to keep such a tragedy from happening again? □



WW PHOTOS: LEILANI DOWELL

March demands ‘Jobs for all!’

By **LeiLani Dowell**
New York

An energetic protest demanding jobs in Harlem, N.Y., and beyond hit several targets on Aug. 6. Community leaders and activists began their action at North General Hospital — where workers, represented by Service Employees Local 1199, were given only four days’ notice that the entire hospital would be shut down. Describing the closing of the hospital as an attack on the whole community, union members declared their struggle to be not just a fight for jobs, but also a fight to preserve affordable health care in Harlem.

Bullhorns in hand, the protesters then marched down 125th Street — a main thoroughfare of Harlem — attracting the attention and support of the shoppers and street vendors on the sidewalks. They handed out flyers announcing an Oct. 2 march for jobs in Washington, D.C., and inviting ev-

eryone to join the Bail Out the People Movement’s Jobs for All Campaign.

The march proceeded to a so-called “Career Center” on 125th. Protesters explained that many welfare offices were being replaced with this type of center, which provides career counseling and some job training, but doesn’t actually provide jobs. Standing in Harlem — an area with staggering levels of unemployment, especially amongst Black and Latino/a youth — activists demanded a real jobs program on the scope of the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s.

Lastly, rally participants marched another couple of blocks along 125th Street to the other “career” option offered to youth of color by the government. Forming a line in front of the Armed Forces Recruiting Center, activists denounced the continued attempts to deceive youth with false promises into fighting imperialist wars. Speakers at the closing rally noted that the money used to wage war

could instead be used to provide jobs and other social services.

Participating in the entire day’s activities were two candidates of the newly formed Freedom Party, City Councilperson Charles Barron and attorney Ramon Jimenez. The two are running for New York state governor and attorney general, respectively, on a ticket challenging the Democratic Party’s all-white slate of candidates. (See workers.org, July 16)

Jimenez, who participated in the successful struggle to keep Metropolitan Hospital in Manhattan, told of the lessons he learned: “You can’t get tired; you can’t get discouraged. Next year they’re forecasting a \$7 billion deficit — we have to get ready for the storm.”

Representatives of Picture the Homeless; the International Action Center; the Harlem Tenants Council; and the youth group Fight Imperialism, Stand Together attended and spoke at the action as well. □

ON THE PICKET LINE

By Sue Davis

No scabs, shout Mott’s strikers

Appealing to 66,000 unemployed workers in the Rochester-Syracuse area of upstate New York, the Dr. Pepper Snapple Group has been hiring strike-breakers since the beginning of July at \$9 an hour to try to keep production going at its Mott’s plant in Williamson. But the 305 applesauce workers, who walked off the job on May 23 rather than accept a pay cut of \$1.50 an hour and loss of their pensions, are standing strong as they daily denounce the scabs. Why did DPS create this standoff? Even though DPS banked \$555 million in profits in 2009 and its CEO collected \$6.5 million, and even though the Mott’s plant is highly profitable, DPS is trying to “take advantage of the economic misery of upstate New York” and crush the workers’ union, according to Local 220 of the Department Store union, a division of the Food and Commercial Workers union (RWDSU-UFCW). (nobadapples.com) DPS says the Mott’s workers are “overpaid” at \$21 an hour when compared with Rochester workers, who average \$14 an hour. (syracuse.com, July 27) But that’s greedy-boss logic. Trying to cut workers’ wages is just another of the bosses’ age-old tactics to bolster their already bulging bottom line. By holding their picket line, the RWDSU-UFCW workers, who process more than half the apples grown in New York state, are standing up for workers everywhere. They deserve the support of the entire labor movement, organized and unorganized.

Domestic workers recognized

After many years of hard-fought struggle, the Domestic Workers Union won recognition of their rights as workers when New York Gov. David Paterson signed the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights in July. The law establishes an eight-hour workday; overtime at time and a half after 40 hours for live-out domestic workers and 44 hours for live-in domestic workers; one day of rest in each calendar week; workplace protection against discrimination, sexual harassment and other forms of abuse; workers’ compensation; and the completion of a study by November about collective bargaining. What a victory! About 4,500 independent home-care providers in Maryland, who are members of Council 67 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, signed their first contract in July. The three-year agreement increases provider rates, sets up a committee to address health and safety concerns, and offers professional development. A provider Bill of Rights is included in the contract, which spells out such things as the need to be treated with courtesy, dignity and respect, and timely reimbursement for services.

CAMDEN, N.J.

Cuts threaten to close libraries

By **Betsey Piette**

It was announced Aug. 5 that Camden, N.J., that state’s most impoverished city, will close all its public libraries by the end of 2010 due to a projected budget shortfall of \$28 million. The shortfall stems from reductions in state aid and lack of taxable property, according to Mayor Dana L. Redd.

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie filed an \$11 billion budget deficit this year, resulting in cuts to cities, schools and libraries. Christie is reducing state funding for libraries by \$6 million, a 43 percent drop.

American Library Association officials believe that Camden might be the first U.S. city to close all its libraries. The only other complete elimination of library services is in the Hood River County Library in Oregon where a vote is scheduled this fall to restore services.

The projected closing of the 105-year-old library system would eliminate 21 jobs and could result in the potential destruction of thousands of books, historic documents and artifacts.

The biggest loss, however, would be to Camden’s 80,000 residents, mostly poor, Black, Latino/a, Asian and white. As of June the official un-

employment rate for Camden was 16.3 percent. The median household income was \$18,000, and less than 23 percent of the population has education beyond high school. Less than one-third of Camden residents have high-speed Internet access at home. Only one bookstore serves the local college, and some public schools lack librarians.

The Camden Free Public Library system provides a valuable service to residents and draws 150,000 visits a year. Libraries allow people to go online and do research for schoolwork and jobs. They also provide a shelter for people who are homeless.

“Of all places, [Camden is] one of the places that needs free public libraries the most,” said Audra Caplan, president of the Public Library Association. (Philadelphia Inquirer, Aug. 6)

The threatened closing of Camden libraries comes on top of votes against additional funding for public schools that rocked New Jersey in April. Fueled by Tea Party-type, right-wing campaigns, several cities in the state voted to cut or not increase funding for public education — an outright attack against teachers, benefits for public employees and the communities they serve.

While local media attribute the problem to “lack of money,” Christie

and other capitalist politicians would rather cut services and social programs than raise taxes on the profits of their rich cronies. The idea that schools and libraries are expendable represents an escalation in the capitalists’ class war against the poor.

Government bailouts of banks and corporations are on the rise, and funding for wars also continues to increase. For Camden residents, the cost of the war in Afghanistan since 2001 amounted to \$81.4 million per year. (nationalpriorities.org)

During this crisis libraries are more essential than ever. The question is how residents of Camden will respond. Because voters on Nov. 4, 1903, voted to establish a library in Camden, another vote might be required to disband the library.

The proposed closing of the libraries will be introduced at the Camden City Council on Aug. 10. It is likely that residents will come out to oppose the closings.

In neighboring Philadelphia a threat to close 11 public libraries in the fall of 2009 led to widespread demonstrations and an eventual lawsuit that stopped the threatened closings. There are growing signs that residents of Camden will wage a similar campaign against the threat to their libraries. □

‘We are our own liberators’

By **Kit Aastrup**

After a three-month wait, the book is finally lying on my table with its shiny cover in brown and purple with a photo of Jalil Muntaqim taken some months before he was incarcerated at the age of 19. Consisting of more than 36 years of prison writings by Muntaqim, this second edition contains numerous updates, poetry and additional essays.

This is not a book you read from page one in sequence. I started with the “Last Word” by George Jackson: “Settle your quarrels, come together, understand the reality of the situation, understand that fascism is already here. That people are dying that could be saved, that generations more will die or live poor butchered half-lives if you fail to act. Do what must be done, discover your humanity and your life in revolution. Pass on the torch, join us, give up your life for the people.”

This collection represents some of the significant contributions Muntaqim has made to the Black Liberation and New Afrikan independence movements. It is not bedtime reading. His poems are strong and multilayered and his analytical insight is sharp as a razor. One of my favorite essays is “The Criminal-

Students get Nike to pay Honduran workers

Already this year United Students Against Sweatshops has scored two big wins for garment workers in Honduras. On July 26 Nike agreed to pay \$1.45 million in severance to 1,800 workers whom it had planned to stiff when it closed two factories in 2009. How did USAS turn Nike around? It started the same kind of pro-worker education campaign that exposed Russell Athletics’ union-busting activities in 2009. That was so persuasive 89 universities cancelled contracts with Russell, which compelled the company to reopen its only unionized plant in Honduras earlier this year. Aware of USAS’s success, Nike folded after only one contract was terminated by the University of Wisconsin — Madison and another at Cornell was threatened. USAS knows how to school major corporations in the need to respect workers’ rights in the only way the bosses understand — how it affects their bottom line. That living example of how to combat capitalist greed and show international solidarity at the same time far surpasses mere textbook learning.

Calif. Labor nixes SB 1070

At the 28th biennial convention of the California Labor Federation, delegates passed a resolution on July 14 condemning Arizona’s infamous anti-immigrant SB 1070 law as “racist, impractical, unenforceable and wasteful.” The resolution called on the Secretary of Homeland Security and the U.S. attorney general to “take all necessary steps to prevent racial profiling, including blocking implementation of SB 1070,” and it called on Congress and President Barack Obama “to pass a fair immigration reform bill that will fix the immigration system once and for all.” Also on July 14 delegates passed a resolution denouncing U.S. Postal Service plans “to eliminate one or more days of delivery; contract out letter carrier routes, mail processing and retail outlets; close post offices; reduce the benefits available to postal workers; and replace career full-time employees with part-time or casual workers.” The CLF agreed to work with five unions representing postal workers “to develop a variety of strategies to Save Six Day Delivery of the mail, oppose contracting out and post office closures, and fight reduction of hours and benefits.” □

Casa reopens

By Teresa Gutierrez

In 1998, a well-known and popular New York City center for Latin American solidarity events, Casa de las Americas, was forced to close its doors due to high rent resulting from gentrification of the neighborhood and other issues.

Casa was not just any center for Latin American events. It was “the” place for events in solidarity with the Cuban revolution, where Latino/a revolutionaries and all progressives could come for good food and drink, political discussion and revolutionary events, from art exhibits to forums.

Everyone on the left knew and respected its president at the time, Luis Miranda. Miranda was a longtime revolutionary and supporter of the Cuban revolution from the beginning. In Miranda’s photo collections, the pictures included many of him with beloved leader Fidel Castro. There was also a picture of Miranda with Che Guevara when he came to New York City. Despite having closed its doors, its legacy of Cuban Americans and Latinos/as who defend the Cuban revolution has continued up to the present.

On July 31, Casa de las Americas reopened with an amazing new office in El Barrio. This is a tremendous development as Casa de las Americas is the oldest Cuban organization in the U.S. that supports the normalization of the relationship between Cuba and the U.S. The news of its reopening does not surprise anyone who understands the tenacity of the Cuban people and their devotion to the Cuban revolution.

Casa’s new president, Nancy Cabrero, told WW: “It was always a primary goal of Casa to reopen. But one of the highlights related to Casa’s reopening was the outpouring of help offered by longtime Casa friends, compañeros and compañeras alike, who helped with construction, knocking down walls, plastering, painting, sanding and refinishing the wood floors, scrubbing, cleaning, and polishing. Organizations also helped spread the good news about Casa’s opening by reaching out to their list serves.

“Franklin Flores, Casa’s secretary of organization, and Jaime Mendieta, first vice president, (pictured here) led the committee that reopened Casa and worked

tirelessly,” said Cabrero. She continued, “I knew that Casa’s reopening would be well attended but never imagined that we would have such an overwhelming response. It was so wonderful to welcome so many friends that we had not seen in a long time.”

Cabrero was unanimously voted into the position of president at one of Casa’s annual meetings in recognition of the role that women play in the Cuban revolution.

The ambassador to the Cuban Mission was a featured speaker at the opening of Casa and excerpts of that talk will be posted later.

One of the goals of Casa is to continue its work on freeing the Cuban Five. “This is one of our priorities,” said Cabrero. “We have encouraged people to use the International Free the Five website to write to Attorney General Eric Holder to seek freedom of the Five. Our campaign with the Wives Without Rights is bringing attention to the unjust incarceration of these five men and the inhumane treatment of Adriana Pérez and Olga Salanueva, who have been repeatedly denied visas to see their husbands for over 10 years.”

Casa is also working with several New York City Council members to pass a resolution on the case of the Cuban Five. Cabrero reported that a significant resolution drafted by union activists in support of the Five passed last week at the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement convention in Las Vegas.

A statement issued by Casa de las Americas President Cabrero reads, “Today the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA), an affiliate of the AFL-CIO, at its 18th National Membership Convention held in Las Vegas, unanimously passed a resolution in support for the immediate granting of Humanitarian Visas for Olga Salanueva and Adriana Pérez, two of the wives of the Cuban Five.



PHOTO: ROBERTO MERCADO

Franklin Flores, Nancy Cabrero and Jaime Mendieta.

“On behalf of Casa de las Americas we would like to extend our deep appreciation to the members of LCLAA for their support in bringing this humanitarian issue concerning Olga Salanueva and Adriana Pérez, wives of the U.S. imprisoned Cuban Five who have been denied visas to see their husbands in almost 12 years, to the floor of your annual convention. We are extremely grateful for the unanimous passage of the resolution in support of granting Olga and Adriana visas by the U.S. government to see their husbands,” stated Cabrera.

“Today LCLAA’s actions bring us one step closer to fulfilling our hopes that it reaches the ears of the U.S. State Department and the hearts of the American people and those who have the power to finally grant Olga and Adriana visas,” Cabrero concluded.

When the Cuban Five are finally freed, should they stop in New York on their way home to their beloved island, surely one stop they will make in the city is at Casa de las Americas, a piece of liberated territory in the U.S. □

Protest hits banks on foreclosures



ATLANTA

More than 200 union members, retirees and community activists mobilized by the Atlanta-N. Georgia Labor Council and the Atlanta Fighting Foreclosure Coalition held a public forum on the housing crisis on July 22. Following that, they protested outside the headquarters building of Wachovia Bank. The state of Georgia and the Atlanta metro area, in particular, rank among the highest in the nation for foreclosures and unemployment.

National AFL-CIO Vice-President Arlene Holt-Baker moderated the meeting, which featured four homeowners threatened with foreclosure and eviction. In

each case either major health issues or the loss of a job created the circumstances that forced workers to refinance their homes, often under subprime rip-off mortgages. The common complaint was the failure of the banks to work with them to save their homes.

Declaring “Bail out people, not banks,” the demonstrators demanded the financial institutions that created the crisis take immediate steps to modify loans and reduce the principal and interest to what the homeowner could afford.

— Dianne Mathiowetz

Review of a book by political prisoner Jalil Muntaqim

ization of Poverty in Capitalist America.” Though it was written years ago, it is still relevant today.

He added another after 9/11: “America reaps what it sows.” “In the 60s, U.S. progressives evolved the slogan, ‘Bring the war home!’ The question is, what will be the slogan this time, now that the war has been brought home?

“Free the land!!”

I really like the poems “What color is your blues?” “Scream Black,” “Outpost,” “Chairman Fred and Captain Mark,” “The Bush Family” and more. The following poem was written after the assassination of Puerto Rican independence leader Filiberto Ojeda Ríos by FBI snipers on Sept. 23, 2005:

My machete is adorn, draped in red
And green, sharpened with the blood
Of a patriot whose life beckons.
Viejo, I hear you from a distant land,
Your words of liberation, freedom and
Independence cuts the wind of tyranny,
The howling ravishing wolves of the U.S.
neocolonialism and exploitation.
The ancestors speak through you on this
137th anniversary of El Grito de Lares,
telling our youth NOW is the time to

restore and rebuild our nation.
Their echo’s reverberates into chords of
Afrikans drums and coqui rhythms with the
Sweetness of cocquitos — Libertad,
Libertad, Libertad, Libertad, Libertad —
We will not forgive or forget!
We will heed the call!
We will champion the Patriots!
We will free our nation!
For our machetes are adorn, draped in red
And green, sharpened with the blood of
A patriot whose life beckons.

Muntaqim calls on the Black progressive forces in “A challenge to the Black Bourgeoisie” to take the lead in building national campaigns and mobilizations within a popular civil and human rights movement. “The struggle for the preservation and restoration of democratic and civil rights must evolve towards a struggle for human rights, which in turn will take the class struggle for national unity toward the final and complete destruction of corporate-capitalist class exploitation and racist imperialist neo-colonial oppression.”

This new edition of the book is published by The Arissa Media Group, Portland, and is available on Amazon.com. □

Women inspire many moven

A historic women’s conference will take place in Montreal from Aug. 13 to 16. Called by the Committee of Women of Diverse Origins, the first Montreal International Women’s Conference will bring together an estimated 200 women and male supporters from at least 19 countries under the main theme of “Building a Global Militant Women’s Movement in the 21st Century.”

The purposes of the conferences are to elevate as many social issues and struggles that link women together worldwide;

to commemorate the centennial of International Working Women’s Day, March 8; and to build an International Women’s Alliance. Along with the CWDO, co-conveners of the conference include GABRIELA Philippines, Asian Rural Women’s Network and Action Network for Marriage Migrants Rights and Empowerment.

Women will be traveling from their home countries, including Philippines, Sri Lanka, Iran, Palestine, Pakistan, Mexico, Ecuador and Mali. A U.S. delegation will also attend led by Filipinas for Rights

and Empowerment. Women’s Fightback Network members will be speaking on plenary and workshop panels. Workers World Party and Fight Imperialism, Stand Together representatives will also attend. WW will be reporting on the conference in upcoming issues.

Tess Tesalona, a conference coordinator, stated in an Aug. 6 press release: “The fact that this conference will happen is a statement of resistance. The initiative and commitment of our sisters around the world is what is driving this process

of coming together. We see how important it is to build an alliance and work together. One hundred years after the declaration of the first International Women’s Day, we are still making the same demands. How do we move forward? What kind of society do we want to build? That’s what we’re here to discuss together.”

The conference will take place at 7400 Boulevard St-Laurent next to the de Castelnau Metro. For more information visit www.miw2010.org.

— Monica Moorehead

Demand repatriation for Dr. Aafia Siddiqui

By Sara Flounders
New York

An international campaign has been launched demanding the repatriation of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui to her homeland of Pakistan. Siddiqui is being held in a federal prison in New York City awaiting sentencing, which is currently scheduled for Sept. 23.

In March 2003, at the age of 30, Siddiqui disappeared along with her three children from a street in Karachi, Pakistan. At the end of that month, the Pakistan media reported that Siddiqui had been arrested and turned over to U.S. officials.

Siddiqui mysteriously reappeared on the streets of Ghazni, Afghanistan, following five years of secret detention. There she was immediately rearrested, shot and almost killed. After emergency treatment, she was brought to the United States and held in solitary confinement for almost two years before being placed on trial before a federal court in New York City.

The government charges were preposterous. Siddiqui had supposedly been first arrested not in 2003 but in July 2008, five years after her disappearance. U.S. authorities claim that when their military personnel went to interrogate her after the



Dr. Aafia Siddiqui

arrest, Siddiqui grabbed a U.S. soldier’s M-4 assault rifle, fired off two rounds and was shot while being subdued.

Questions of how the bullets supposedly fired by Siddiqui failed to hit a single one of the 20 to 30 people in the small, crowded room, or hit any wall or floor, or leave any residue or fingerprints were never answered. Witness testimonies often contradicted their earlier sworn statements and the testimonies of others. The prosecution urged the jury to ignore science and irrefutable facts and believe the contradictory testimony of U.S. Special Forces soldiers and FBI agents. In the current intense climate of fear over “national security,” the jury found her guilty of assaulting and attempting to murder her U.S. interrogators.

Siddiqui’s missing son, Ahmed, was reunited with his aunt in late 2008, while her daughter, Maryum, was dropped near the aunt’s home in Karachi in April, after she had been missing for seven years. Siddiqui’s youngest child, Suleman, who would now be about 7 years old, remains missing and is feared dead.

There have been massive demonstrations in Pakistan’s major cities demanding the return of this 38-year-old mother, now

dubbed the “daughter of Pakistan.” There is already immense international outrage about her case. Siddiqui has repeatedly maintained in court appearances that she was tortured while in U.S. custody.

Siddiqui’s five years in secret detention in Pakistan and Afghanistan, her grievous injuries, her two years in solitary confinement in the U.S. and her trial in New York City have been top news in Pakistan. Civil rights, religious and women’s organizations have marched and petitioned, demanding the U.S. allow her to return to Pakistan.

Dr. Fauzia Siddiqui, her younger sister, in stressing the urgency of a campaign for Aafia Siddiqui’s repatriation, explains that under U.S. law a foreigner tried by a U.S. court can be repatriated to the country of his or her nationality on the request of that government before the pronouncement of a sentence. She says there are 19 such precedents in which prisoners, after indictment, were repatriated to their countries at the request of their respective governments.

Dr. Aafia Siddiqui is neither a U.S. citizen nor a permanent resident. She had only one passport, issued by the Pakistani government.

Siddiqui has not been charged with committing any crime on U.S. soil. Therefore she should not have been extradited to the U.S. for trial but either tried in Afghan-

istan or extradited to Pakistan. She was not charged with terrorism nor with injuring or harming anyone anywhere. She is a victim of terrible, life-threatening injuries.

The Pakistani government should insist through diplomatic channels on Siddiqui’s repatriation. Based on overwhelming Pakistani sentiment for Siddiqui’s return, the U.S. government should grant this humanitarian request.

Petitions demanding Siddiqui’s repatriation, directed to President Barack Obama and Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari, as well as the media, will be delivered on Aug. 14 — Pakistan Independence Day — to the Pakistan Mission to the United Nations. To sign the petition, visit iacenter.org. □

‘I like to think of

Following are the lyrics of a song written by Phil Wilayto nearly 30 years ago, which he dedicated to the struggle of the Puerto Rican people for independence.

When it seems like my courage is failing,
and it feels like my strength is all gone,
When the months and the years are punctuated by tears
and it feels like I just can’t go on,
I like to think of Lolita Lébron.

When Lolita Lébron was a young girl,
with her nation she fought to be free;
When her people were rising in nineteen and fifty,
with her comrades she travelled to Washington, D.C.,

Women at forefront of Africa’s

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Many articles have been written reflecting on five decades of historical experience — referred to as the 50th anniversary of the “Year of Africa” — since 17 African nations gained political independence. Yet few pay adequate attention to the indispensable role of women in the campaigns for national liberation and their continuing efforts in the present century.

On Aug. 9, 1956, some 20,000 women in South Africa marched from various regions to the apartheid capital of Pretoria. They represented a cross-section of women, most of whom were African, who resided and worked in both urban and rural areas of the country.

Throughout the 20th century women in South Africa resisted the policies of the European settler-colonial rule under both British and Boer domination. As early as 1908, African women fought against racist laws that prohibited the brewing and distribution of traditional beverages, outlawed so that the men could be lured into beer halls and drained of their wage earnings.

Women boycotted and picketed the beer halls, forcing many to close. They demand-

ed that profits from the establishments be utilized to develop housing and amenities for the African people relegated to the townships by the racist colonial system.

Indeed, it was the women-initiated struggle against the pass laws that sparked a broad-based mass movement during the 1950s. The major demand of the women’s march on Pretoria was to abolish the passes that controlled the movement of Africans inside their own country.

“In 1952, passes were extended to African women throughout the country. Up to 1918, when they had been withdrawn in the face of stringent resistance, they had been applied to African and Colored women in the Orange Free State alone,” writes researcher Fatima Meer in “Women in Apartheid Society.” (reprinted in Pambana Journal, February 1986)

Meer then points out the underlying reason for the enforcement of the apartheid pass laws: “The intention was to contain the women in the reserves, to leave them there to starve with their dependents, the unemployable young, the sick and the old.”

This women-led struggle against the pass laws was protracted. Meer recounts: “There was spontaneous resistance to the imposition of passes throughout the

country and the resistance continued for eight years. Thousands of women were repeatedly imprisoned. In 1954, 2,000 were arrested in Johannesburg, 4,000 in Pretoria, 1,200 in Germiston, and 350 in Bethlehem. In 1955, 2,000 women marched to the Native Commission’s office in Vereeniging.”

The African National Congress Women’s League, founded in 1943, was the most prominent organization in this movement against pass laws, using its branches throughout the country to build a national campaign.

Women from both the Natal Indian Congress and the ANC combined forces and formed a broader organization. Both organizations were at the core of the 1954 founding of the Federation of South African Women, which played an integral part in the Campaign of Defiance of Unjust Laws that lasted from 1952-1956.

In 1960 the ANC Women’s League organized a demonstration of both women and children who were family members of those detained during the state of emergency in Durban. During this demonstration some 60 women and children were arrested and imprisoned.

The ANC Women’s League was banned alongside the parent organization after

the apartheid police opened fire on demonstrators, killing 69 and wounding nearly 200 in what became known as the Sharpeville Massacre of March 21, 1960. Nonetheless, this tradition of struggle was to carry over through the 1980s and 1990s. In 1994 the masses of workers and youth were able to overturn the racist apartheid system.

Women and the movement for African unity & socialism

Women’s struggles like those in South Africa took place in various forms in many African states from the 1950s through the early 1990s, when the last vestiges of white-minority rule were eliminated in southern Africa. A major effort took place in 1960 when the All-African Women’s Conference (AAWC) was formed in Accra, Ghana.

Ghana in 1960 was considered the fountainhead of national independence and Pan-Africanism. Kwame Nkrumah, the leader of the Convention People’s Party, relied heavily on women in the urban and rural areas during the struggle for independence and the postcolonial period.

C.L.R. James in his book “Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution” noted that “in the struggle for independence, one market woman ... was worth any dozen Achimota [college] graduates. ...”

ments, past and present

LOLITA LEBRÓN, example of courage & sacrifice

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

Expressing the sounds of her beloved Puerto Rico, hundreds of people singing *plenas* and chanting about her valiant character accompanied independence fighter Lolita Lebrón to her final resting place in the Old San Juan Cemetery. She was buried close to her dear Maestro, Don Pedro Albizu Campos. As she had requested, the burial took place just over 24 hours after her death.

“Lolita Lebrón, ejemplo de valor” (example of courage) and “Se siente, se siente, Lolita está presente” (You can feel Lolita’s presence) were chanted mostly by women. On several occasions they took the weight of the casket from the men carrying it.

Not only pro-independence Puerto Ricans from all parties and organizations attended, but people of all political affiliations honored Lebrón. The breadth of support attested to Lebrón’s nurturing and humane nature and her relentless call for unity to defend Puerto Rican identity. She made friends across party lines.

Lebrón was as fierce defending independence as she was humble in appreciating all who fought for Puerto Rican values. One example was her friendship with Norma Burgos, a pro-statehood senator, present at the funeral, who shared jail time with



Lolita Lebrón at Vieques.

Lebrón for opposing the U.S. Navy occupation of the island of Vieques, which it used for bombing exercises.

Lebrón’s death immediately aroused a steady stream of heartfelt messages, poems, videos and songs across the internet. Both alternative and corporate newspapers ran obituaries, including an article in the Washington Post that spoke for the ruling class of the city where Lebrón was arrested in 1954. The Post’s author compared Lolita to revolutionaries like the Argentine/Cuban Che Guevara and Mexican Pancho Villa. The international community, especially Cubans and Nicaraguans, sent many messages.

Lolita Lebrón’s life, both personal and political, represents the history of Puerto Rico during the consolidation of U.S. colonial power on the island and the fight against that domination. Lebrón was born on Nov. 19, 1919, in the city of Lares, where in 1898 people rose up against Spanish domination in what is known as the Grito de Lares.

The event called “the Ponce massacre” marked Lebrón’s teenage years. On Palm Sunday — March 27, 1937 — colonial police surrounded a peaceful demonstration by members of the Nationalist Party in the city of Ponce. Under the direct orders of U.S.-appointed and U.S.-backed Gov. Blanton Winship, police opened fire, killing 22 unarmed people and wounding 200.

In 1941, leaving her daughter under her

mother’s care, Lebrón left Puerto Rico for New York City. As did thousands of Puerto Ricans in the 1940s, she sought a job that was better than the unstable, poor existence facing them on the island. She worked in the garment industry and formally joined the Nationalist Party in New York, becoming an important leader. Lebrón was jailed for a brief period along with other Nationalists after demonstrations in front of the U.N. against “Free Associated State” status that the U.S. imposed on Puerto Rico in 1952.

In 1954 Nationalist leader Don Pedro Albizu Campos suggested an action in Washington, D.C., to call international attention to the island’s status. The year before, the U.S. government had convinced the U.N. to approve a resolution that took Puerto Rico off the list of colonial territories. This resolution allowed the U.S. to withhold information about Puerto Rico from the U.N., clearing the way to intensify the island’s exploitation.

On March 1, 1954, Lebrón led the operation in the House of Representatives with Nationalist comrades Rafael Cancel Miranda, Irving Flores and Andrés Figueroa Cordero. Shouting “Viva Puerto Rico libre” and unfurling a Puerto Rican flag, she was the first one to shoot — at the ceiling.

Except Flores, who was able to escape, the other three were immediately arrested. Hundreds of Nationalists were arrested for “prevention detention” in New York, Chicago, Washington and all over Puerto Rico, including Albizu Campos. Lebrón was sentenced to 56 years in prison, and the rest to 81 years for “assault with a weapon.”

In 1979 after a great deal of pressure — particularly from the Puerto Rican Political Prisoners Committee — President Jimmy Carter pardoned them along with Nationalist Oscar Collazo who had been imprisoned since 1950 for the attack on Blair House. They were all freed unconditionally. Figueroa Cordero had been freed in 1978 because of ill health. Carter par-

doned them along with Nationalist Oscar Collazo who had been imprisoned since 1950 for the attack on Blair House. They were all freed unconditionally. Figueroa Cordero had been freed in 1978 because of ill health.

In an Aug. 4 interview with the Puerto Rican weekly *Claridad*, Cancel Miranda remembers Lebrón’s courage: “[S]he went up the stairs [in Congress] and I saw this woman and I do not get tired of saying it, she was carrying not only our flag, but our dignity. ... There was this Puerto Rican woman from Lares, going up these stairs knowing that she was going to die; because she went to give her life [for our homeland].”

Once free, Lolita continued tirelessly in the struggle to liberate her homeland: going on tours, giving speeches, writing poetry, but mostly joining others in demonstrations in Puerto Rico. She was a visible figure in the struggle against the Navy presence in Vieques and was arrested at age 81 for crossing into restricted shooting grounds.

In spite of great suffering during her incarceration in federal prisons in the U.S., where she was cruelly mistreated and mentally tortured, coupled with her own personal losses — both her children died while she was in prison — Lebrón kept unwavering commitment to the struggle for independence. Her contributions are many — writings, poems, but, above all, her work assuring that women are active participants and leaders in the struggle. She is an example of Albizu Campos’ famous pronouncement: “La Patria es valor y sacrificio” (Homeland is courage and sacrifice).

Lolita Lebrón, ¡Presente! ¡Viva Puerto Rico Libre!

The writer participated in the movement to free political prisoners in Puerto Rico and was part of a team of progressive physicians who examined Lebrón, Cancel Miranda and Flores upon their return to Puerto Rico in 1979.



f Lolita Lebrón’

And they climbed to the gallery of Congress
as independence was voted away,
And rudely interrupting, their pistols erupting,
they shouted, “¡Que Viva Puerto Rico Libre!”
When the struggle seems to go on and on,
I like to think of Lolita Lebrón.

For twenty-five years in a cold Yankee cell,
far from the island that she loved so well;
And they told her that she could be free anytime,
and all it would take was her name on a line,
A promise that she’d never fight them again,
and in twenty-five years, she never took up that pen;
When the struggle seems to go on and on,
I like to think of Lolita Lebrón. □

liberation struggles

A writer on the CPP-ruled era in Ghana history wrote of women inside the party: “Together with the workers, young men educated in primary schools and the unemployed, women became some of Nkrumah’s ablest, most devoted and most fearless supporters.” (Kwame Arhin, “The Life and Work of Kwame Nkrumah”)

The Women’s Section of the CPP was formed simultaneously with the party itself. The CPP provided opportunities for the wider involvement of women in politics inside the then Gold Coast (later known as Ghana). In 1951, the CPP selected Leticia Quake, Hanna Cudjoe, Ama Nkrumah and Madam Sohia Doku as propaganda secretaries who traveled around the country conducting political education meetings and recruiting people into the party.

By the time of independence in 1957, women such as Mabel Dove, Ruth Botsio, Ama Nkrumah, Ramatu Baba, Sophia Doku and Dr. Evelyn Amarteifio were playing leading roles as organizers, politicians and journalists. In 1960 they consolidated the various women’s mass organizations into the National Council of Ghana Women.

After Ghana became a republic in July 1960, the Conference of Women of Africa and of African Descent was convened in Accra, the capital. Nkrumah addressed

the gathering, saying, “Who would have thought that in the year of 1960, it would be possible to even hold a conference of all Ghanaian women, much less of women of all Africa and women of African descent?” (Evening News, Ghana, July 19, 1960)

Nkrumah then asked: “What part can the women of Africa and the women of African descent play in the struggle for African emancipation? You must ask these questions not by word of mouth but by action — by positive action, which is the only language understood by the detractors of African freedom.”

Shirley Graham DuBois, the spouse of W.E.B. DuBois and an accomplished writer, organizer and committed socialist in her own right, was in Ghana at the time of the founding of the First Republic and the inauguration of the NCGW and the AAWC. She stated in an address before the Women Association of the Socialist Students Organizations in Ghana that “the advancement of Ghanaian women in recent years has been amazing and now with ten women Parliamentarians in Republican Ghana, this country had achieved what took Europe centuries to accomplish.” (Evening News, July 14, 1960)

In supporting the then movement to-

ward socialism in Ghana, DuBois recounted her travels to the People’s Republic of China and the achievements of women since the revolution of 1949. She claimed in her address that “the women of Socialist China were advanced in all spheres of useful activity and enjoyed equal rights with men politically, economically, culturally, socially and domestically.”

Women went on to play pioneering roles in other African liberation struggles in Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Algeria, Tanzania, Guinea, Nigeria and Sierra Leone as well as many other states. At the present time, the African Union has declared 2010 the beginning of the “Decade of Women (2010-2020)” on the continent.

Challenging gender inequality

At the recent annual summit of the African Union, the overall theme of the gathering was initially focused on the status of maternal health and children. Under pressure from his U.S. imperialist backers, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni tried to redirect the emphasis of the summit to carrying out Washington’s foreign policy objectives in Africa.

The social dynamics of the world eco-

nomie crisis have impacted Africa and forced an estimated 50 million people into poverty. The continuing influence of capitalist economic policies on Africa is a direct result of the subordinate integration of the continent’s productive forces to the imperatives of the multinational corporations and financial institutions.

To fully challenge gender inequality and the impoverishment of women and children in Africa, the struggle must be directed against Western domination and capitalist relations of production. This struggle in Africa can be supported by anti-imperialist forces in the industrialized states when they demand that their own imperialist governments honor the right of self-determination and sovereignty of the oppressed, postcolonial nations. □

AFGHANISTAN

U.S. manipulates women’s condition to build war support

By Joyce Chediak

It is shocking and disturbing. Time magazine’s cover has a picture of a young Afghan woman whose nose has been cut off. The headline reads, “What happens if we leave Afghanistan.” (Aug. 9)

Time’s story claims the Taliban ordered 18-year-old Aisha’s nose and ears cut off because she left her husband and fled abusive in-laws. She is now living in a Kabul women’s shelter run by an American non-governmental organization, and will come to the U.S. for reconstructive surgery

Surely, this cruel and abusive treatment of women must not be permitted anywhere. Time’s implication, however, that the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan is the only barrier preventing further horrendous treatment of Afghan women is a lie. The article is manipulating the feelings of well-meaning people, while exploiting Aisha’s plight, in order to further Washington’s genocidal war, which has hurt Afghan women the most.

Time’s goal? Answering WikiLeaks

The recent WikiLeaks publications showed “How coalition forces have killed hundreds of civilians in unreported incidents. ... How a secret ‘black’ unit of special forces [death squads] hunts down Taliban leaders for ‘kill or capture’ without trial. ... How the coalition is increasingly using deadly Reaper drones to hunt and kill Taliban targets by remote control from a base in Nevada,” and how there has been a steep rise in Taliban bomb attacks on NATO troops. (The Guardian, July 25)

A separate editorial in the Aug. 9 issue of Time entitled “What’s hard to look at”

admits that its cover picture and story are meant to counter the WikiLeaks publication. The magazine pitches its cover story as “emotional truth” and “something you cannot find in those 91,000 documents” of the leaked information.

Priyamvada Gopal, professor of English at Cambridge University who specializes in women and postcolonial theory, more accurately described the strategy behind what Time is doing. The WikiLeaks documents, she writes, “reveal CIA advice to use the plight of Afghan women as ‘pressure points,’ an emotive way to rally flagging public support for the war.” (The Guardian, Aug. 3)

Time has dropped all semblance of objective reporting. The magazine has taken the CIA’s “advice” and exploited Aisha’s plight to build war support. Truthfully, the more than 30 years of war in Afghanistan that Washington fueled and abetted has locked many rural Afghan women into the worst of both worlds: a medieval social structure and the destruction and dislocation of imperialist war.

Afghan women’s advocate Suraya Pakzad recently described the desperate situation for women in her country and its cause. “Three decades of war, displacement, warlordism, gun trafficking and narcotics trafficking,” she said, “come together and create a really hard situation for women. When there’s no security and continuation of war, there’s no guarantee for women’s rights.” (Politics Daily, March 10)

CIA’s war erased women’s gains

The U.S. press gets nostalgic about the freedom women in Kabul enjoyed before

the Taliban. They fail to mention that the only government that brought significant gains to Afghan women took power in 1978 and sought to build socialism in Afghanistan.

Working under difficult conditions in one of the poorest countries in the world, the women and men in this government achieved the following: Feudal laws restricting women were abolished, and women became professors, attorneys, judges and government ministers. Seventy percent of the teachers, 50 percent of the government workers and 40 percent of the doctors were women. This government also sought ways to reach out to rural Afghanistan to develop it socially and economically.

Washington opposed this government from day one and courted the same rural feudal elements who found women’s new authority unacceptable. For its own ends, the U.S. exploited these feudalists’ misogyny as much as their anti-communism. The rural rulers who saw women as property would have been swept into the dustbin of history had U.S. imperialism not given them a new life and more than \$3 billion in weapons.

The warlords overthrew that progressive government in 1992, after 13 years of vicious war financed by the U.S. and organized by the CIA. Soviet intervention to aid the progressive government was also thwarted. Even the New York Times admits, “The mujahedeen leaders who forced out the Soviets in the late 1980s were as conservative as the Taliban in many places, keeping women at home in order to preserve family honor instead of educating them or integrating

them into the government.” (July 30)

U.S. empowered anti-women groups

The U.S. government was not promoting Afghan women’s rights when it installed the Northern Alliance, which ruled Afghanistan from 1992 to 1996. This clique was seen as “a symbol of massacre, systematic rape and pillage.”(The Independent, Nov. 14, 2001).

The Taliban took control of Afghanistan in 1996, but the U.S. raised no objections for five years. When the Bush administration invaded the country in 2001 and defeated the Taliban, it installed in its place the misogynist Northern Alliance. The current Kabul government still contains many members of this group, which are as reactionary on women’s rights as the Taliban.

Meanwhile, the U.S. government has played it both ways. Beginning in 1979, Washington used the gains made by women under the progressive Afghan government to provoke reactionary forces into action against that government. Today, for U.S. domestic consumption, Washington claims it is “rescuing” Afghan women from the very same reactionary forces it armed and empowered.

An imperialist occupying army can never improve women’s conditions in a country it occupies. The best thing for the women of Afghanistan is for the U.S. to leave completely and unconditionally and cease all covert and overt interference in this tortured nation. Only then will Afghan women and men have the chance to build a safe and stable environment where they can make their needs known and have them met. □

Trial of Charles Taylor

Who really controls Africa’s ‘blood-diamond’ trade?

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Corporate media coverage in early August of British model Naomi Campbell’s testimony at the Special War Crimes Court on Sierra Leone doesn’t provide a clue to the background of this trial against former Liberian President Charles Taylor.

Taylor is charged with utilizing diamonds to fund the Revolutionary United Front, a rebel group in Sierra Leone. Campbell’s testimony centered around whether or not she had received diamonds from Taylor.

In addition, Campbell’s testimony revealed nothing about the origins of the political crises in Liberia and Sierra Leone — or of the historic role of the imperialist states in diamond marketing and distribution.

In the aftermath of a tumultuous civil war which lasted for seven years, Taylor overwhelmingly won the 1997 elections in Liberia, gaining recognition by both the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (later the African Union).

In 2003, after the intervention of U.S. troops in Liberia, Taylor went into exile in Nigeria. He was later handed over to the International Criminal Court in the Netherlands, where he has remained over the last six years.

Liberia is a major producer of diamonds, but the mining and marketing of these

gems are not controlled by the government or anyone else on the African continent.

This lack of control can be traced back to the late 18th and early 19th centuries when Britain and the United States established these areas as colonial outposts under the guise of providing a homeland for former enslaved Africans.

British, U.S. domination over Sierra Leone, Liberia

When Lord Mansfield held that a slave owner could not remove Africans from England by force in 1772, opponents of the Atlantic slave trade interpreted the ruling as an act of emancipation. Later during the U.S. revolutionary war, British colonialists promised liberation to enslaved Africans who sided with them.

London grew into a center for African groups during the 1780s. Many British organizations felt that the solution to the emergence of an unassimilated race was to establish a “Christian-oriented” settlement in West Africa that would fall under the direct control of British finance capital and influential churches.

In 1787 approximately 400 Africans departed from England to establish a new society in the region now known as Sierra Leone. During the early years the country was ruled by the British-owned Sierra Leone Company.

Thomas Peters, who had formerly been

enslaved in the United States, led 1,200 free Africans from Nova Scotia, Canada. Eight years later hundreds of Africans from Jamaica who had rebelled against British slavery arrived.

After the British abolished slavery in 1807, the population of repatriates grew to more than 70,000 in Sierra Leone.

Liberia too grew out of the willingness of enslaved Africans to return to the land of their ancestors, as well as the desire of the European settlers in the U.S. to rid the country of free Africans and establish a trade outpost in West Africa. The settlements began in 1821.

In 1847 Liberia was recognized as an independent republic. Nonetheless, the country remains under U.S. influence to the present day.

European colonial powers who controlled the neighboring territories blocked any commerce with Liberia. Faced with an economic blockade, the Liberian government was forced to accept a 100,000 pound sterling loan from the British at a very unfavorable rate in 1871.

By the early 20th century, Liberia had received less than one-third of the loan and was so far in debt that it sought a bailout. In 1912, a \$1.7 million loan was granted by a consortium headed by J.P. Morgan, National City Bank, First National Bank of New York and Kuhn Loeb & Co. Liberia’s financial operations were, for all practical

purposes, taken over by the United States in conjunction with consortium partners Britain, France and Germany.

After World War I began, the U.S. government appointed a receiver-general who assumed total control of Liberia’s national treasury.

Imperialist influence has continued through control of the iron ore and diamond industries. During the 1960s the exploitation of iron ore was dominated by Germany, France, Italy and Belgium, with a substantial portion of the output going to the U.S.-based Bethlehem Steel Corporation.

Whose ‘blood diamonds’?

Several major diamond-producing firms operate inside the country. The largest is Hatton Diamonds, which is part of the DeBeers Central Selling Organization. This firm has controlled the Liberian diamond market for decades and runs the government’s industry office.

DeBeers was formed by British settler-colonialist Cecil Rhodes in 1870 and taken over in 1926 by white South African mine owner Ernest Oppenheimer. Another major player is the Belgium-based Antwerp Company.

The diamond industry in Liberia has never been under the control of its people.

Of course, this fact will not be raised

Continued on page 9

Afghan war logs reveal U.S. death squad’s crimes

By Gene Clancy

A top secret unit of U.S. Special Forces called Task Force 373 set out on June 17, 2007, in the Patika province of Aghani- stan to purposely commit a war crime. Task force 373 is a death squad organized by the NATO coalition in Afghanistan to hunt down targets for death or deten- tion without trial. Details of more than 2,000 alleged leaders of the Taliban and al-Qaida are held on a “kill or capture” list, known as Jpel for Joint Prioritized Effects List.

On that occasion, the target was a man named Abu Laith al-Libi. Task Force 373 believed he was hiding in a remote village in Patika province. The unit was armed with a new weapon known as HIMARS — High Mobility Artillery Rocket System — a pod of six missiles on the back of a small truck.

According to Pentagon war logs re- cently released by WikiLeaks, TF 373’s plan was to launch five rockets at targets in the village of Nangar Khel where Libi was supposedly hiding and then send in ground troops. The rockets failed to find Libi but killed six men TF 373 claimed were Taliban fighters.

Then, when troops approached the rubble that was once a school, they re- corded “initial assessment of 7 x NC KIA,” which translates as “seven non-combat- ants killed in action.” All of them were children. One of them was still alive: “The Med TM immediately cleared debris from the mouth and performed CPR.” After 20 minutes, the child died. (WikiLeaks War Logs quoted in The Guardian, July 25)

The U.S.-led coalition issued a press release claiming that troops “had surveil- lance on the compound all day and saw no indications that there were children inside the building.” The release also claimed that Taliban fighters, who sup- posedly were in the compound, had used the children as human shields.

The bodies of the six “Taliban” were in

a completely different building than the school where the children were found. The release suggested that coalition forc- es had attacked the compound because of “nefarious activity” there, when the real- ity was they had gone there to kill or cap- ture Libi.

The press release made no mention at all of Libi, nor of the failure of the mission (although that was revealed later by NBC News). Crucially, it failed to record that TF 373 had fired five rockets, destroying the school and other buildings and killing seven children, before anybody fired on them. This was a mission to murder.

The internal report was marked not only “secret” but also “NoFORN,” that is, not to be shared with non-U.S. members of the coalition. The wording of the report was very specific: “The knowledge that TF 373 conducted a HIMARS strike must be protected.” And it was. That is, until the recent release of 91,000 secret Pentagon cables by a whistleblower inside the U.S. intelligence establishment.

‘Sources and methods’ of imperialist occupation

Both the Obama administration and the Pentagon have opened a virulent at- tack on those who released the Afghan War Logs. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Admiral Mike Mullen, chair- man of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, used a Pentagon press conference on July 29 to vilify WikiLeaks and its editor, Julian Assange, while vowing to crack down on anyone involved in making the docu- ments public.

Additional charges have been filed against SPC Bradley Manning, who is al-

ready accused of releasing a video show- ing a massacre in Iraq. The Army recently moved Manning from Kuwait to Quantico, Va., where it is holding him in prison.

According to the Pentagon brass, the Afghan war logs’ release has endangered NATO troops and Afghan collaborators because they reveal the “sources and methods” of U.S. intelligence units. The generals don’t seem to worry that us- ing death squads against the people of a country that they illegally occupy is a direct violation of the Geneva Conven- tions and international law. Or that the Afghan people already know from bitter first-hand experience how these horrific war crimes have been committed — and by whom.

What the brass really worry about is that the leaks will undercut political sup- port for the war at home and around the world.

Another slaughter, followed by torture

Another potential war crime was the slaughter of Jan. 12, 2008. After tracking the movements for 24 hours of the man ranked seventh on the Jpel list, Qari Baryal, the coalition established that he was holding a large meeting with other men in a compound in Pashkari. The command sent planes that dropped 500-pound bombs, then ran five strafing runs to shoot those fleeing the scene.

The report records that some 70 people ran to the compound and started digging into the rubble on which there were “pools of blood.” Subsequent reports suggest that the targeted Baryal survived. There was no mention of how many people died or had been wounded.

Numerous logs show Jpel targets cap- tured and transferred to a special prison, known as Btif, the Bagram Theatre In- ternment Facility. No logs indicate that prisoners were charged or tried. Previ- ous press reports suggest that prisoners have spent years with no legal process in communal cages inside vast old airplane hangars.

Considering how the U.S. ran intelli- gence operations at Abu Ghraib, Iraq and Guantanamo, it’s likely that detainees are tortured. By December 2009, a total of 4,288 prisoners, some as young as 16, had been held at Btif, with 757 still in custody.

Who are TF 373?

The leaked war logs show that Task Force 373 uses at least three bases in Af- ghanistan: in Kabul, Kandahar and Khost. Although TF 373 operates alongside Spe- cial Forces from Afghanistan and other coalition nations, it appears to be drawing its own troops from the 7th Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, N.C. It travels on missions in Chinook and Cobra helicop- ters flown by the 160th Special Opera- tions Aviation Regiment, based at Hunter Army Airfield, Ga.

The release of the Afghan war logs can help mobilize anti-war forces, but it’s important to seize the opportunity it presents. We must redouble our efforts to stop the illegal war and occupation in Af- ghanistan and bring the troops home. It is encouraging that on Aug. 8 more than 100 anti-war demonstrators gathered outside the Quantico base demanding “Free Bradley Manning” and that the war criminals, especially those at the highest level, be held accountable. □

FREE THE CUBAN FIVE HEROES



Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, René González Sehwerert, Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez and Fernando González Llort.

Message from Cuban 5 hero Danny Glover visits Gerardo Hernández

On Aug. 8, star actor Danny Glover visited Gerardo Hernández, one of the Cuban Five anti-terrorist heroes now imprisoned in the United States. Hernández had been held for 13 days in “the hole,” which sparked a broad protest. The following message from Hernández was sent out by the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five. E-mail info@cuban5.org or go to www.thecuban5.org.

Aug. 3, 2010

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

I am dictating these words via tele- phone, which is why I must be brief and I will not be able to say everything I would have liked. Yesterday afternoon I was removed from “the hole” with the same speed in which I was thrown in. I had been taken there supposedly because I was under investigation. These investiga- tions can take up to three months, some- times more, but I was there 13 days. As a known Cuban journalist would say — you can draw your own conclusions.

I want to express to all of you my deep gratitude. You know that they were par- ticularly difficult days due to the exces- sive heat and the lack of air, but you all were my oxygen. I can’t find a better way to summarize the enormous importance of your solidarity efforts.

Many thanks to all the compañeras and compañeros from Cuba and around the world, who joined their voices to condemn my situation. Thanks to the institutions, organizations and individu-

als of goodwill that in one way or another worked to bring an end to this injustice.

To our President Raúl, that so honors us with his support. To the Cuban Na- tional Assembly and its President Ricar- do Alarcón, a tireless fighter for the cause of the Five. To my four brothers, who sent me messages of encouragement, and who have also suffered and lived under constant risk of suffering similar abuses. And of course, to our dear Commander in Chief: Thank you for so much honor! (I don’t know if I should say it, but just the privilege of hearing my name in Fidel’s voice makes me feel like thanking those who put me in “the hole.”)

Thank you Comandante for the joy of hearing you and seeing you as great as ever!

Thanks to everyone for having dem- onstrated again the power of solidarity which, without a doubt, will one day make us free.

The struggle continues!

A big embrace,

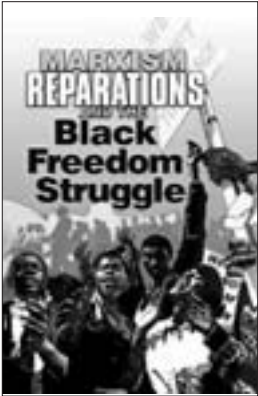
Gerardo Hernández Nordelo
U.S. Penitentiary, Victorville, CA

Continued from page 8

at Charles Taylor’s trial. Neither will the fact that under George W. Bush, the U.S. played an instrumental role in overthrow- ing Taylor through the Guinea-based Liberians United for Reconciliation and Development rebel group, which received arms and training from Washington.

In its efforts to bring African leaders before the International Criminal Court — such as Taylor and Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir — the court has focused exclusively on leaders from the continent and ignored the most devas- tating war crimes committed by the U.S. ruling class and other Western imperial- ist states. It is these crimes that are being covered up in the Taylor trial.

Full article at workers.org.



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What recovery? Time to fight

The latest jobs report and economic growth numbers confirm that no recovery is in store for the working class. On the contrary, mass unemployment is likely to get worse, not better. The short-lived “jobless recovery” is on the decline after less than a year, following a downturn lasting 19 months.

Working-class leaders must face this truth and fashion a way to fight back. There is no other course to relieve the plague of unemployment and the growing suffering it causes.

In July, the latest month of the so-called “recovery,” official government numbers showed a 131,000 net loss of jobs. The private sector, according to the government, created 91,000 jobs. But that was overwhelmed by the loss of 202,000 government jobs at the federal, state and local level.

Overall official unemployment is 9.5 percent. Things are worse for oppressed workers. Black and Latino/a joblessness is at 15.6 percent and 12.1 percent, respectively.

Official total unemployment, including forced part-time work and workers who have stopped looking for jobs, is 16.5 percent, or 25.8 million. This is a minimum figure. Bear in mind that it takes somewhere between 150,000 to 200,000 jobs just to keep unemployment from growing!

Furthermore, the economic trend is down. The economy increased by only 2.1 percent in the recent quarter. This is a decline from its peak at the end of 2009, which was 5.5 percent. Economic growth has gone down steadily since then. Capitalism is an unstable system. It must either expand or contract. The meager expansionary phase is on track to come to an end.

The \$787 billion stimulus package,

the tens of billions handed to the auto industry, the cash for clunkers program, the special tax write-offs for home buyers, to say nothing of the trillions of dollars handed to the banks, have all failed to jump-start U.S. capitalism. And the bosses are on a hiring strike. They are sitting on \$1.8 trillion in cash. They have grabbed \$1.2 trillion in profits based on ruthlessly cutting the workforce.

As Workers World wrote June 17: “This is an unorthodox recovery, stimulated by capitalist government spending, which amounts to the printing of money. But even at this early stage of the recovery, it is already showing signs of weakness and instability. If the enormous already-existing problems of unemployment and budget cutbacks were not enough to set off alarm bells in the heads of leaders of the working class, these latest economic numbers should.”

This is even truer today.

The workers cannot afford to be in denial. There is an urgent need for mass mobilization to open struggles for jobs, to end the layoffs, for the reopening of closed facilities and, above all, for a government Works Progress Administration-style program to provide jobs, at living wages with benefits, to the tens of millions who are out of work or underemployed.

Waiting for the bosses to hire or giving them tax breaks in the hope they will hire is a dead end. The only thing that will get the attention of the bosses and bankers and their government in Washington is to combat racism and mobilize for united action, for struggle, to shake up the system and not let business go on as usual until the workers are put back to work, people are put back in their homes, and services are restored.

The time for that struggle is now. □

Hiroshima after 65 years

U.S. talks peace, prepares new bombs

By Kathy Durkin

Sixty-five years ago the entire world watched in horror as the United States dropped atomic bombs over Japan.

On Aug. 6, 1945, the U.S. B-29 bomber Enola Gay dropped a four-ton uranium bomb on Hiroshima, only to follow that horrific attack by unleashing a plutonium bomb on Nagasaki three days later. The cities became infernos.

By the end of 1945, more than 250,000 people — men, women, children, mainly civilians — were dead. Many were incinerated instantly. People within a one-mile radius of Hiroshima were vaporized. Thousands died agonizing deaths soon after from burns, injuries and radiation poisoning. In subsequent years, more deaths occurred from cancers and other radiation-related diseases.

Sixty percent of Hiroshima was destroyed. The bomb was aimed at the city center; residential areas bore the brunt of the impact. Only four of the 30 targets were military, in line with U.S. war policy of bombing Japanese civilian populations. Nagasaki, an industrial city and port, was flattened.

Among those who died were 20,000 Koreans in Hiroshima and 2,000 in Nagasaki, whom Japan had drafted as forced laborers during World War II. Conscripted Chinese workers were killed, too.

The U.S. is the first and only country ever to use nuclear weapons. Washington has never shown regret for the bombings nor apologized for causing such monumental destruction and devastation of human life.

As the war was ending, the U.S. dropped the A-bombs to assert military hegemony in Asia and as a warning to the socialist Soviet Union. Washington showed the world that it had developed and would use nuclear weapons against civilian populations.

This year’s commemoration ceremony at the Hiroshima Peace memorial was attended for the first time by representatives of nuclear powers Britain, France and the U.S. The U.S. Embassy claimed that Ambassador John Roos attended to support the administration’s goal of a “world without nuclear weapons.”

Japanese anti-war activists stood firm and rightfully criticized the U.S. at an “alternative memorial” nearby. They called for the U.S. to apologize for the bombings and to remove all military bases from their country.

There has been a long and massive struggle to get U.S. bases out of Okinawa, where 70 percent of U.S. bases in Japan are situated. Especially key to activists is the Futenma Marine Corps Air Station, one of the largest U.S. bases in East Asia. The U.S. refuses to relocate or close this facility, as it is key to its military strategy there.

Nobel Laureate Kenzaburo Oe warned in the New York Times of “the possibility that we [Japan] will allow [U.S.] nuclear weapons to pass through Japan.” Oe explains that this violates Japan’s post-war nonnuclear principles, which forbid nu-

clear weapons from being brought into the country. (Aug. 5)

Can the U.S. government be believed when it claims to be for a nuclear-weapons-free world? Actions speak louder than proclamations.

Since 1946, the U.S. has threatened to use nuclear weapons at least 30 times, including against the Soviet Union, China, Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, Iran and Iraq.

In April, prior to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty review conference, Washington asserted the right of nuclear first-strike against Iran and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea if the U.S. decided they were violating nonproliferation rules.

No agency is downsizing the U.S. arsenal’s 5,113 nuclear warheads, 12 nuclear-powered submarines and 1,152 nuclear warheads in the world’s oceans. The U.S. isn’t cutting back on its international stores of thermonuclear bombs and cruise missiles.

Instead, in May, the Obama administration proposed increasing nuclear weapons-related funding to a record \$180 billion over the next decade — \$80 billion for modernizing the nuclear weapons complex and \$100 billion for strategic nuclear delivery systems, including bombers and submarine-based missiles.

This multi-billion-dollar, profit-driven weapons production is inherent to capitalism. So is the war drive. The imperialist U.S. is compelled to strive for global economic, political, military and strategic domination.

Any discussion of nuclear nonproliferation must begin with the U.S. If the Obama administration claims to support this, then it should stop research and development of new weapons and begin to disarm immediately.

Fidel Castro appeals to Obama

On the anniversary of Hiroshima’s devastation, Cuban leader Fidel Castro made an urgent personal appeal to U.S. President Barack Obama through a special address to the Cuban National Assembly, calling on Washington to refrain from unleashing a nuclear attack on Iran.

Nuclear war is a great danger to the world’s people. The global stockpile is equivalent to 150,000 times the potency of the bombs dropped on Japan.

The world’s anti-war forces must keep up the struggle for nuclear disarmament. U.S. activists have the primary responsibility of demanding unilateral nuclear disarmament of U.S. imperialism, even as the world’s people demand elimination of all these weapons.

The enormous sums spent by the U.S. on nuclear weapons’ funding could instead be used to create a real jobs program for millions of unemployed and underemployed workers, to build hospitals and schools, and to provide health care, housing, education and nutritious food for all.

Progressive forces must organize to stay the hand of U.S. imperialism so that there is never another nuclear attack. □

MUNDO OBRERO

Un ciclo capitalista vicioso Ganancias aumentan mientras patrones despiden trabajadores/as

Continúa de página 12

unirse con un programa práctico para sacar los trillones de dólares de las bóvedas de los bancos y corporaciones, los cientos de miles de millones de dólares regalados al Pentágono, y los trillones en rebajas de impuestos para los ricos, y usar ese dinero para emplear a todos/as los/as trabajadores/as.

La administración de Obama ha dado muchas concesiones y rescates a los bancos y corporaciones, pero no es la responsable por la crisis económica. Es el capitalismo mismo y la clase capitalista que

siempre está buscando ganancias los que son responsables.

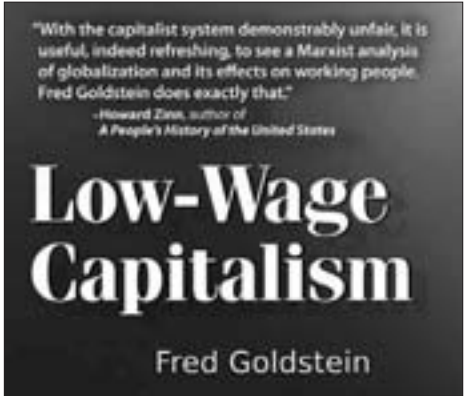
Este pequeño grupo de multimillonarios es el dueño y controlador de la economía y la enorme riqueza creada por la clase trabajadora. Son quienes controlan el sistema global de producción por ganancias. En última instancia, la economía debe ser tomada de sus manos y entregada a los/as trabajadores/as para que la producción pueda ser planeada para solucionar las necesidades de la mayoría, no para las ganancias de algunos pocos. □

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High Tech, Low Pay

Twenty years ago Sam Marcy wrote that the scientific-technological revolution is accelerating a shift to lower-paying jobs and to more women, Black and Latino/a workers. Using Marxism as a living tool he analyzes the trends and offers strategies for labor including the occupation of plants.

A new introduction by Fred Goldstein explains the roots of the current economic crisis, with its disastrous unemployment, that has heightened the need for a working-class resurgence.

Global warming and capitalism

Speculators feast on Russian disaster

Continued from page 1

Russia would run about 14 degrees above average through Aug. 12, rising to as high as 108 degrees Fahrenheit in some areas. And only the privileged have air conditioning in most of Russia.

The weather service also reported that rainfall in July in central Russia and along the Volga River, the areas hardest hit by fires, ranged from 10 percent to 30 percent of the long-term average.

“Futures prices [of U.S. wheat] fell sharply in the financial crisis, from nearly \$13 a bushel in early 2008 to around \$4.50 a bushel less than 10 months later. In early June, they were trading around \$4.28 due to an apparent glut,” reported the Wall Street Journal on Aug. 9, which hastened to add that, with the Russian disaster, “Prices surged above \$7 last week.”

Speculators who are betting that wheat prices will go even higher hope there will be no rain.

But others are betting that the rains will come, the Russian crop will be saved, and there will consequently be a glut on the market next year, causing prices to fall.

Farmers in grain-exporting countries all over the world, especially the U.S., Canada and Australia, are trying to figure out whether wheat will be making money next year or prices will continue to be low. If the latter, they are likely to plant corn instead of wheat, figuring they can sell it to the energy market for ethanol.

The irony is that world grain stocks are now at the third-highest level on record and prices have been dropping, even though in the U.S. farmers have pulled back from wheat in favor of corn. The size of the wheat crop shrank 11 percent in the

past two years, to 2.2 billion bushels, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Whatever happens over the next year, the world will not run out of wheat, but poorer countries and people may not be able to afford it.

The speculators and exploiters of human labor don’t look at the problem from the point of view of hunger and suffering. They’re concerned only about profits. “A titanic 2011 U.S. acreage battle is brewing,” said Rich Feltes, senior vice president for research at MF Global, a commodities brokerage firm. (Wall Street Journal, Aug. 9)

This means that it will be the speculators, not the farmers, who in the end determine which crops are grown — and it will be based on how much profit they think can be made. They are also already speculating in the currencies of the countries involved, anticipating that inflation will depreciate the money.

Capitalism and climate change

It is the drive for profits that has pushed capitalist expansion in both industry and agriculture in the modern age. This drive for profits is not only behind the speculation that is driving up wheat prices — it is also behind the climate change that is so cruelly buffeting Russia this summer.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, a U.S. governmental body, released a report on July 28 that confirmed the planet is heating up rapidly. The report got scant attention in the corporate media, even though it summarized the findings of more than 300 climate scientists in 48 countries who measured 10 separate planetwide features, including

air and sea temperatures, humidity, Arctic sea ice, glaciers, and spring snow cover in the Northern hemisphere.

The impact of continuing change, it says, will be extreme heat waves, heavy downpours in some areas and drought in others, rising ocean temperatures and acidification, insect infestations and wildfires, and sea level increases of more than three feet in some areas. (noaanews.noaa.gov) It all adds up to widespread disasters unless governments rein in greenhouse gas emissions — which appears remote, as that would threaten the interests of the ruling classes that dictate the economic policies of the capitalist countries and have blocked any meaningful international treaties on climate change.

Do today’s leaders in Russia acknowledge this problem?

After all, Russia used to be part of the Soviet Union, which developed its industry according to a plan, not according to the whims of the capitalist markets. That economic plan was of course damaged by the vicious struggle of the capitalist world against socialism — both the invasion by Hitler Germany in 1939 that cost the USSR 20 million lives and much of its industry in World War II, and then the U.S.-led Cold War. This unrelenting military offensive forced the Soviet leaders to prioritize defense when the people needed relief from extreme wartime scarcity.

The Soviet Union, despite many gains for the masses made possible by the workers’ revolution of 1917, did not survive. Russia today is a capitalist country where “entrepreneurs” look to profit out

of any disasters. This bourgeois view of “development” has been expressed by its political leaders, who have looked for business opportunities in the thawing of the permafrost and in the melting of sea ice north of Siberia that now blocks potential navigation channels between Europe and Asia. But the current crisis has forced a change.

President Dmitri Medvedev, who until now has been one of those leaders ambivalent about global warming, said recently: “Our country has not experienced such a heat wave in the last 50 or even 100 years. We need to learn our lessons from what has happened, and from the unprecedented heat wave that we have faced this summer.

“Everyone is talking about climate change now,” he continued. “Unfortunately, what is happening now in our central regions is evidence of this global climate change, because we have never in our history faced such weather conditions in the past. This means that we need to change the way we work, change the methods that we used in the past.” (“Russian fires prompt Kremlin to abruptly embrace climate change,” Christian Science Monitor, Aug. 9)

It is not likely that politicians who have embraced capitalism will learn the real lessons of the growing disasters now plaguing the world. The future lies instead with anti-capitalist forces that are growing, especially in the oppressed countries, and that say, along with Bolivian President Evo Morales, “Save the world — from capitalism.” □

Workers, Immigrants, Unemployed, Youth, Students:

Capitalism is Killing the People & the Planet

- If you are interested in abolishing a profit-hungry system that is:
- throwing people out of work and their homes
 - closing schools and hospitals ● denying universal health care
 - making war ● bailing out banks ● jailing the poor & the youth
 - racial profiling Black people, Latinos/as, immigrants and all people of color
 - destroying the environment with global warming & oil spills

Workers World Party & Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST), from coast to coast are actively organizing in the struggles for jobs, education, housing, health care; organizing to stand up against racism; to say no worker is illegal in Arizona and elsewhere; and for women’s and lesbian, gay, bi, transgender, queer equality. We are organizing to stop imperialist wars in Iraq, Afghanistan & oppose occupation from Haiti to Palestine.

WWP & FIST are Fighting for Socialism—a world without oppression, exploitation, poverty and war — where all the wealth of society belongs to the people and is used to meet human need not corporate greed. Don’t wait until the Nov. conference. Workers World holds weekly meetings and discussions in addition to organizing. If you are interested call us at 212-627-2994, email wwp@workers.org and go to workersworld.net for updates on the Nov. 12-14 conference.

Then it’s time to stand up, unite and fight back for a socialist future!

Workers World Party REGIONAL CONFERENCES

Western LOS ANGELES Sept. 4
Southern California Library 6120 S. Vermont Ave.
Registration opens at 9 a.m.
Pre-register at www.workersworld.net
Call: 323-515-5870
e-mail: westcoastconference@workers.org

Midwest CHICAGO Sept. 18
UE Headquarters, Main Hall 37 South Ashland Ave.

Southeast DURHAM, N.C. Oct. 16
Save the date!

WORKERS WORLD PARTY CONFERENCE NOV • 12 ~ 14 New York City



Even CIA Statistics Show ‘Free market’ brings disaster to Eastern Europe

By Caleb T. Maupin

The Central Intelligence Agency, a ruthless enforcer of Wall Street’s drive for profits, publishes “The World Factbook.” It gives updated statistics for every country, some of which measure quality of life and societal health, such as life expectancy, infant mortality, literacy, unemployment and industrial production. In this series, Workers World examines some surprising conclusions, all using the CIA’s own statistics. Even though these statistics often understate gains compared to United Nations figures, they can’t help but show that countries benefit by breaking with imperialism.

When the Soviet Union dissolved and the socialist countries of Eastern Europe experienced counterrevolutions, the press proclaimed that the “free market” would bring prosperity to the people there. The media claimed that the collapse of the USSR was due not to 72 years of hot and cold war against the socialist regime, but to an inherent flaw in socialism.

They claimed that now that capitalism had returned to the USSR and Eastern Europe, prosperity and increased quality of life would ensue.

Statistics show that the actual results of the massive counterrevolutions were otherwise.

Belarus is the only country in the former USSR still attempting to maintain a socialist economic model. The rest of the former USSR and Eastern Europe have

largely succumbed to the economics of the “free market.”

National infant mortality rates are universally recognized as basic quality of life barometers. The socialist economy of Belarus has achieved a relatively low infant mortality rate of 6.34 deaths per 1,000 births in the first year. Estonia, Hungary, Slovakia, Lithuania and Poland all have higher infant mortality than socialistic Belarus. The infant mortality rate in capitalist Ukraine is 8.73.

Capitalist Georgia, whose pro-Western regime attacked Russia in 2008, has a very high infant mortality rate of 15.67, while Bulgaria’s infant mortality is 17.26.

The highest infant mortality in Eastern Europe is suffered by Romania. Romania was the victim of a brutal capitalist counterrevolution in 1989 and its president was executed. Under the free market, the infant mortality rate has climbed to 22.09.

It seems that the restoration of capitalism in Eastern Europe has hardly been an “economic miracle.” Almost 20 years after the collapse, Eastern Europe has entered the “free world” of high infant mortality and shorter life expectancies.

It seems that Belarus, dubbed “the last Soviet Republic” by Western media, and demonized for its refusal to adopt capitalist economics, has a much better quality of life than the regimes that “reformed” themselves into the system of free-market chaos and impoverishment.

More to come

Un ciclo capitalista vicioso

Ganancias aumentan mientras patrones despiden trabajadores/as

Por Fred Goldstein

Las ganancias corporativas están creciendo, la basura corporativa se está acumulando, el comercio ha incrementado. Pero los empleos no van a regresar pronto para millones de desempleados/as.

Este es el tema recurrente en los noticieros capitalistas. Demuestra profunda ansiedad ante la nueva etapa de la economía capitalista y la forma en que la “recuperación sin empleos” se está presentando.

Mientras que 30 millones de trabajadores/as siguen desempleados/as o subempleados/as, las ganancias corporativas han aumentado a una tasa anual de \$1,2 millones de millones (billones) — más altas que en el apogeo de la burbuja. Gran parte de ese dinero proviene del despido de trabajadores/as y la extracción de más productividad de los/as que quedan.

“Resulta”, escribió Steven Pearlstein en el Washington Post del 30 julio, “que las empresas han encontrado maneras de producir tanto como siempre, pero con menos trabajadores/as. Como resultado, el año pasado la productividad por hora trabajada aumentó más de un 6 por ciento, aunque las ganancias promedio por hora han aumentado menos del 2 por ciento. El resto del aumento de productividad ha ido directamente a la empresa, creando un botín récord de dinero en efectivo para las empresas.

“Parte del efectivo ha sido usado para pagar deudas o recuperar acciones” continúa el artículo, “pero hasta ahora una cosa que las empresas no han hecho es recontractar a los/as empleado/as a tiempo completo, prefiriendo contratar trabajadores/as temporales o aumentar las horas de los/as trabajadores/as que ya tienen”.

Pearlstein luego hizo una observación muy franca a la prensa: “La única sorpresa es que nadie se sorprende por la falta de contrataciones en el sector privado. Es solo en el mundo de la propaganda de la Cámara de Comercio que las empresas existen para crear puestos de trabajo. En el mundo real, las empresas existen para crear ganancias para los accionistas y no empleos. Por eso es que lo llaman capitalismo, no emple-ismo”.

Cuando un portavoz empresarial como el Washington Post permite ese comentario anti-capitalista, es un signo de preocupación profundo acerca de la permanencia de este sistema económico.

El 26 de julio The New York Times describió la misma tendencia en un artículo titulado “Empresas estadounidenses exprimen enormes ganancias de los recortes de empleos”. El título lo dice todo.

El Times optó por centrarse en la Harley-Davidson cuyas ventas han caído durante los últimos tres años. Pero a pesar de esa sequía”, observó el Times, “las ganancias de la Harley están aumentando — de hecho, disparándose. La semana pasada, Harley reportó ganancias por \$71 millones en el segundo trimestre, más del triple de lo que ganó hace un año.

“Esta aparente contradicción — caída

en ventas y aumento en ganancias — es una de las razones por las que el estado de ánimo en Wall Street está mucho más animado que en los hogares, donde el pesimismo es profundo y el desempleo muestra pocas señales de calmarse”.

Un futuro de contracción económica y despidos

El Times señala el hecho de que Harley ha despedido a 2.000 trabajadores/as - una quinta parte de su fuerza laboral — y tiene previsto despedir entre 1.400 y 1.600 más a finales del próximo año. La Harley ha advertido a sus empleados de sindicato en su fábrica de Milwaukee que trasladaría la producción a otras partes de los EEUU si no aceptaban reglas más flexibles de trabajo y decenas de millones en medidas de ahorro.

La evolución de Harley es parte de un cambio a largo plazo en la industria manufacturera de EEUU, dijo Rod Lache, analista del Deutsche Bank, en el artículo del Times. “Estas empresas han descifrado la clave de un giro industrial exitoso. Están disminuyendo el negocio a un tamaño que es defendible, y renaciendo desde esa base más pequeña”.

“A mayor escala”, continúa el artículo, los ingresos de la Ford se han reducido \$20 mil millones desde 2005. Pero este año, en lugar de pérdida, espera anunciar una ganancia de \$5 mil millones en gran parte debido a que “la Ford ha reducido su fuerza laboral de América del Norte en casi un 50 por ciento en los últimos cinco años”.

“Cuando Alcoa reportó una recuperación en las ganancias este mes y un aumento del 22 por ciento de los ingresos”, añade el Times, “su presidente financiero, Charles D. McLane Jr., le aseguró a los inversionistas que no estaba ansioso por recuperar los/as 37.000 trabajadores despedidos desde finales de 2008. “Tenemos un enfoque estricto sobre los gastos a medida que aumenta la actividad del mercado, operando con mayor eficacia y minimizando recontractaciones cuando sea posible” dijo. “No sólo estamos sosteniendo los niveles de trabajadores, sino que también estamos conduciendo la reestructuración de este trimestre de manera que de lugar a nuevas reducciones”.

Un portavoz de Alcoa dijo que la compañía “tuvo que ser redimensionada para conformarse a las realidades de la crisis”.

Industrias enteras están teniendo más ganancias que nunca con menos ventas. Menos ventas reflejan menor producción. Menos producción refleja menos empleos. Y esta es una condición permanente que surge de la actual crisis económica.

Solicitudes nuevas de seguro por desempleo y la ‘recuperación’

Desde finales de 2007, estos jefes han despedido a más de 8 millones de trabajadores/as en la peor crisis económica desde la Gran Depresión. Eso se suma a los 7 millones ya desempleados antes de que la crisis estallara. Millones más han sido puestos/as en horas parciales, han sufrido despidos temporales obligatorios, o han

sido forzados/as a trabajar con reducción de sus salarios bajo duras condiciones y aceleración del ritmo de producción.

Se estima que 150.000 nuevos puestos de trabajo se necesitan cada mes sólo para contratar a los/as jóvenes que comienzan. Ahora muchos de estos jóvenes no pueden conectarse al mercado laboral y ni siquiera aparecen en las estadísticas.

La mayoría de los despidos ocurridos son permanentes. Los empleos no regresarán, a pesar de que ya estamos oficialmente en el cuarto trimestre de una “recuperación”.

Las solicitudes nuevas para seguro por desempleo se han mantenido alrededor de 450.000 por mes durante todos los ocho meses de la “recuperación”. El reporte más reciente de las solicitudes nuevas para seguro de desempleo se redujo en un promedio de 4.500 en cuatro semanas. Este descenso representa una baja de sólo un 1 por ciento, lo que es estadística y humanamente irrelevante para los/as casi medio millón de trabajadores que solicitaron.

¿Qué tipo de “recuperación” es cuando el desempleo oficial se mantiene en 9,5 por ciento? No hay ningún misterio acerca de la crisis del desempleo. Los capitalistas la causaron. Y ahora esos millonarios y multimillonarios se aferran a sus ganancias y sus reservas de efectivo en lugar de aliviar el sufrimiento en masa que han causado.

Empresas no financieras están sentadas sobre \$1,8 billones de reservas en efectivo, aproximadamente una cuarta parte más que al inicio de la recesión. Sin embargo, rehúsan recontractar trabajadores/as a tiempo completo en un número significativo a pesar de la desesperada crisis de empleo. La gente está perdiendo sus hogares, están viviendo en sus coches, viviendo dos y tres familias por casa, perdiendo su seguro de salud y su dignidad humana, mientras los ricachones que manejan el sistema de ganancias encuentran formas de reducir aún más la fuerza trabajadora.

Un enfoque marxista de la crisis

Los/as marxistas tenemos tanto un análisis de la crisis como una estrategia de lucha.

Desde el punto de vista analítico, es evidente que el propio capitalismo está en un callejón sin salida. El sistema no puede arrancar de nuevo y ha llegado a un punto de crisis histórica. Toda la tecnología, todo el aumento de la velocidad en la producción, el gran ascenso de la productividad — otro nombre para el gran aumento en la tasa de explotación de la clase obrera — ha traído consigo las contradicciones del capitalismo a un nuevo nivel.

Los/as trabajadores/as deben tener empleos para vivir bajo el capitalismo. Para que tengan empleos, la producción debe expandirse constantemente. Para que la producción se expanda, los mercados deben expandirse para que los capitalistas puedan obtener ganancias al vender sus productos. Pero los patrones están aumentando sus ganancias cortando salarios, despidiendo permanentemente a

trabajadores/as y cortando las horas de trabajo. Al hacerlo, están destruyendo el poder de compra, de consumo de los/as trabajadores/as.

La crisis actual con su “recuperación sin empleos” muestra que el capitalismo solo tiene miseria reservada para la clase trabajadora, y especialmente para afro-americanos/as, latinos/as, inmigrantes indocumentados/as, jóvenes, mujeres y todos/as los/as trabajadores/as oprimidos/as que sufren una tasa mayor de desempleo y reciben sueldos más bajos. Los capitalistas han estado instalando tecnología que destruye empleos por ya tres décadas hasta que ha alcanzado un momento crucial: El sistema es ya tan productivo que tiene que reducir la producción para seguir rentable.

Éste es el ciclo vicioso del capitalismo que sólo se empeora mientras continúa.

A exigir un programa nuevo de empleos en el estilo de la Administración de Progreso de Trabajo (WPA)

Mientras que éste es un análisis marxista de la situación, la respuesta marxista de lucha es que los patrones están en huelga de no emplear. Y los/as trabajadores/as deben luchar de cualquier forma que puedan para conseguir empleos. Deben luchar para reabrir los lugares de trabajo cerrados. Deben luchar para volver a sus empleos a los/as trabajadores/as despedidos/as. Y deben establecer que tienen el derecho a un empleo. No hay otra manera para los/as trabajadores/as vivir bajo el capitalismo — el derecho al trabajo se reduce al derecho a la vida.

Los patrones tienen \$1,8 billones en efectivo que pueden usar para recontractar a los/as despedidos/as si los fuerzan una movilización masiva de la clase trabajadora y las comunidades alrededor del país.

Pero además de estas batallas directas con los patrones, el gobierno capitalista debe ser forzado a dar a cada trabajador/a que lo necesite, un empleo con sueldo sostenible y beneficios. En la Depresión de los años 30, la administración de Roosevelt, bajo la presión de manifestaciones masivas, fue forzada a lanzar el programa de la Administración de Progreso de Trabajo (WPA). Ese programa proveyó empleos a 8 millones de trabajadores/as.

La cuestión de empleos se está convirtiendo en una cuestión política tomada por la derecha para atacar a los/as trabajadores/as indocumentados/as y hasta la administración de Obama. Esta campaña tiene el propósito de dividir la clase trabajadora y envenenar el ambiente con racismo para impedir que los/as trabajadores/as se unan contra su enemigo verdadero: los patrones y banqueros que están brutalmente echándolos/as a las filas de desempleo y despojándolos de sus viviendas.

El ataque de la derecha no incluye la exigencia de un programa de empleos para todos/as. Pero el movimiento de trabajadores/as, el movimiento sindical y todas las organizaciones de masa deben